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# Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

VOL. IX, No. 21

DECEMBER 12, 1949

\$2.00 per year; 10 cents per copy

## "Is Saul Also Among the Prophets?"

IT used to be said by European Protestants that American Protestants were strongly "activistic" and weak on theology. That characterization occasioned little resentment in America both because it was recognized as essentially true and because it was regarded as nothing to be ashamed of. At the same time, as contacts between the European and American churches became closer through the growing ecumenical movement, American Protestantism developed a sense of inferiority on this point and became more hospitable to theology—though often as to a stranger.

Today one may be somewhat startled by reading of a changed outlook in European Protestantism. A German theologian writes in an ecumenical publication that the church in Germany "has suffered from an over-emphasis on theology and from not being sufficiently grounded in the life of the parishes and supported by leading laymen." And this judgment receives support in reports from many countries. Meanwhile, the activist mood continues to be dominant in American Protestantism, though somewhat chastened with respect to its confidence and optimism. It is worth more than a passing thought that the churches in Europe and America should have arrived by different paths at positions that represent something of a rapprochement. There is certainly greater possibility of mutual understanding than was true a dozen years ago. Yet the difference in approach to theological problems remains very pronounced.

It can hardly be doubted that our European friends came more legitimately, in theological terms, by their new "lay" outlook than we did. With them it was their theology itself, and especially their biblical orientation, that in time of great crisis furnished the impetus toward a deepened concern for the historical, the "existential," the concrete present, for the world of daily decisions and choices in which the layman lives. With us in America preoccupation with the here and now was probably due more to the impact of secular patterns of thought and action than to religious insight into the tragic aspects of existence or the biblical conception of human destiny.

Merely to state this contrast is to point up a continuing difference between American and European Protestantism. The framework of Protestant thought in Europe is much less tinged with secular philosophy than is ours. It is true, of course, that the same cleavage exists between different Protestant groups in this country. But the over-all contrast can scarcely go unrecognized by a careful observer. An illustration may make the point clearer.

A few weeks ago the ninetieth birthday of John Dewey was observed in New York with an astonishing demonstration of esteem. He was hailed as the formulator of an American philosophy and the remaker of American education. Messages poured in from all over the world. A Supreme Court Justice extolled Dewey's philosophy. A great labor leader praised his liberalism. A minister hailed his contribution to religion. The hundreds of sponsors of the celebration included Protestant bishops and professors of theology. When it is recalled that John Dewey has parted company with all conventional religion, espousing naturalism as against supernaturalism and humanism as against traditional theism, the spectacle is startling—but typically American.

One is constrained to ask the meaning of all this. Making due allowance for Christian courtesy and also for the fact that quite aside from philosophy Dewey has made an acknowledged contribution of first magnitude to educational science, there remains an incongruity in the way Protestant leaders find it possible to take John Dewey, so to speak, in stride. It would be quite impossible for Catholic churchmen to do that. Indeed, the Catholic explanation of the situation would probably be quite simple: the gradual secularization of Protestant thought.

That explanation cannot be summarily thrust aside. The kinship between Protestant and secular thought is in some respects disturbingly marked: for example, in our expositions of the doctrine of separation between church and state and in much of our philosophy of religious education and social work. The religious group that is numerically preponderant in any culture must continually guard itself against uncritical incorporation in its own life of patterns

and standards evolved in the secular milieu. But to explain such a phenomenon as the John Dewey anniversary as merely a case of secular invasion is a bit too facile.

Perhaps the truth is that our theology and philosophy of religion are more in flux than we realize: that we have not sensed the full implications of the Protestant idea that man's soul is never doctrine-bound but is always free to hear a new word. "God speaks, not merely spake." More especially do we need to ponder the fact that Christian thinking is bound to be more than an unfolding of something within the corporate life of the church. It is that, plus the reaction of Christian minds to the de-institutionalized Christian idealism which, originally derived from the Christian tradition, comes back to confront the church, and to fertilize its thought.

Nothing is more vapid, to be sure, than the shallow eagerness with which many spokesmen for religion reach out to baptize a high-sounding secular utterance and claim spiritual kinship with its source. Nevertheless Mr. Dewey's closing words in his modest response to the overwhelming ovation are worth pondering by us all. "If we are ridden by fear," he said, "we lose faith in our fellow man—and that is the unforgivable sin." Is this to be dismissed by theologians as a "secular faith," or does it contain an element of *religious* faith—a commitment that runs far beyond what is ordinarily called humanism? And may the real explanation of the honors heaped upon this extraordinary nonagenarian be something that is as yet dimly understood both by traditional religion and by a boisterous humanism?—F. E. J.

## Streaks of Dawn in the Night

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

In almost every discussion of the present international situation some one asks a plaintive question which paraphrases the old question, "Watchman, what of the night?" Are we nearer or farther from a possible atomic conflict? What has been the effect of the discovery that the Russians have the atomic bomb? What shall we say of the news, which has recently leaked out, that bombs a thousand times as effective as those thrown upon Japan have either been perfected, or will be in the foreseeable future? Are we involved in an armament race which must inevitably lead to disaster? These are some of the questions which people ask within the general meaning of the one question, "Watchman, what of the night?"

It would be a ridiculous presumption on the part of the present writer to pose as the watchman who could answer these questions. Some peripheral knowledge of international affairs, nevertheless, emboldens him to suggest that the night is not quite as dark as it seems to some. There are streaks of dawn in the darkness.

Let us enumerate some of the favorable elements in the present situation:

1. The success of the European Recovery Program has been quite remarkable, even though the original achievements in restoring Europe's productive power are now overshadowed by the new difficulties in finding markets for the goods produced. Whatever the failures of American foreign policy, we have a right to congratulate ourselves for a moment (though it must not be for more than a

moment) that a nation so little experienced in international responsibility should have accepted these wide responsibilities commensurate with our new power. Let us, incidentally, not congratulate ourselves on our generosity. Nations are, on the whole, not generous. A wise self-interest is usually the limit of their moral achievements; though it is worth noting that nations do not achieve a wise self-interest if generous impulses do not help to drive them beyond the limits of a too narrow self-interest. The European Recovery Program is as necessary for the health of America as for the recovery of the Western world. We should refrain from making undue moral claims for it. We would be well advised, in fact, to strive for modesty in the years to come, and not to expect gratitude from our supposed beneficiaries. Gratitude is a grace beyond the moral competence of nations. It is in any event not as deserved as the supposedly generous nations imagine.

The mood of self-congratulation must not last for more than a moment; for it is already apparent that the "sterling-dollar" gap will not be closed at the conclusion of the Marshall Plan, and that American statecraft must invent new devices for easing the tension between a rich nation and a poor world. These devices undoubtedly must take other forms than direct grants. The great need of the non-Communist world is a higher measure of currency convertibility. Perhaps the next step will have to be some scheme which will bring American power behind a plan which will overcome the bilateral restrictions upon trade, which desperate nations devise to

save themselves from bankruptcy, and which impede the progress toward the economic recovery of all the nations.

2. Real progress has been made in coordinating Western Germany, both politically and economically, into the European world. This necessary step has long been impeded by French hatred and fears and, to a lesser degree, by British fears of German competition. It is significant that the desire to counteract the propaganda value of the Russian establishment of an Eastern German government has had something to do with overcoming the reluctance of the European nations to take this step. For the same reason the ridiculous dismantling program has finally been stopped. We were on the whole more virtuous, at least in recent years, on these issues than the European nations, partly because we do not fear either the economic competition or the strategic strength of a restored Germany as much as they; and partly because Germany is costing us about a billion dollars a year. We would like to get out from under that burden. The attitude of Britain toward these problems has not been as intransigent as that of France. It has, nevertheless, not been too cooperative for the understandable reason that the British export problem is desperate; and Germany is a dangerous competitor. Nevertheless the British policy might well prompt a challenge of the dogma, held by many, that Socialist nations are inevitably more "international" in their outlook than Capitalist ones. Pressing necessities play havoc with ideologies.

3. Developments in Asia are on the whole negative. They cannot be interpreted as conducive to world peace. On the other hand, a Communist China is not as immediate a strategic threat as imagined by some. The Communism of Asia is primarily an expression of nationalism of subject peoples and impoverished nations. We still have a chance to espouse their cause and help them to achieve independence and health. The settlement of the Indonesian problem, in which by the way we played a creative part, will be of tremendous value to our cause in the East. We have fortunately rid ourselves of the handicap of seeming to support a moribund Chinese Nationalist government. We must not pretend that the Chinese Communists are anything but Communists. But we are evidently, and fortunately, not going to make the mistake either of treating China as merely an aspect of the Russian problem and thus we will not dissipate the value of a hundred years of friendship between China and our nation. It may take a long time to prove that we are better friends of China than Russia is. But if Russia should prove as heavy-handed in dealing with China as she has been with the Eastern European nations it may not take as long as it now seems.

4. The Russian empire in Eastern Europe may not yet be crumbling but it is in a rather desperate

plight. The Russians cannot easily liquidate Tito. Should they fail to do so the temper of nationalist revolt against their repressive economic and political measures will spread. The Rajk trial in Hungary, in which they destroyed the second ranking Communist of the country because of his supposed "nationalist deviations," proves not only the danger to Russia of nationalist sentiments among even loyal Communists, but also the inability of Russia to deal with the moral problems of international cooperation in any but the most tyrannical terms. From the religious viewpoint it is interesting that the Russians are driven to their extreme measures, not only by desperate economic necessities, but also by the inability of a political religion with ostensible internationalist goals to understand its own nationalist corruption of these international ideals. The satellite nations are, therefore, forced to deal with a dominant power which is perpetually clad in the mantle of a perfect self-righteousness. Nothing in human relations is more difficult to bear than this.

It is important to note that Poland, which has enjoyed a larger measure of freedom than any of the other satellite nations, has recently had a Russian field marshal forced upon it as its minister of defense. This can only mean that the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany, and the Polish dissatisfaction with the new German policy, have made Russia more nervous about its position in Poland. The purges in Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, reach a new pitch of fury, revealing the degree of discontent in that unhappy nation. In the light of these developments it is silly to speak as if time were altogether on the side of Russia. We can afford to continue a policy of firmness without provocation and hope that ultimately the Russian tide in Europe will recede.

5. There are, furthermore, real evidences that our policy will contain less and less provocation. The peace of the world will have to be maintained for years to come, primarily by the preponderance of power in the Western world. But let no one imagine that this "power" is, or can be, primarily military. Overt force is like the fist of a hand. But "power," in the moral and political sense of the word, is like the total strength of a body plus the psychic vitality of the soul which is in the body. The preponderance of power in the Western world is constituted primarily of the moral and economic health of that world. We cannot relax our military defenses. But it is obvious that Russia will defeat us or we will defeat Russia in political and moral terms long before a sword is drawn or a bomb is dropped. And if we should be victors in that moral struggle no overt conflict need follow. It is always possible, of course, that a desperate dictatorship might become hysterical and start an overt conflict without too much chance of success. No peace can, therefore,

be guaranteed. But the chances of avoiding a conflict are brighter than they have been for a long time. Our own State Department is much more in charge of foreign affairs, and less under the pressure of the defense departments, than at any time since the close of the war. Let those who insist that we are in an armament race, consider the President's rejection of the congressional plan for a seventy-group air force.

Much remains to be done. But what has to be done must be done primarily in functional terms moving from point to point and from case to case, primarily with the end of strengthening the economy of the non-Communist world. Ambitious plans for constitutional changes, to which a certain type of both secular and religious idealism is prone, are a hindrance rather than a help. The United Nations must be strengthened. But its new strength must come primarily in its own experience. That is how, even now, the General Assembly has gained a prestige and a power not originally intended in the charter or only obliquely intended.

There are two sets of plans for solving the problems of the world by constitutional changes. One set of plans calls for a world government with Russia included. The other calls for a federation of all democratic peoples. The plans for world government are almost completely irrelevant. They presuppose the possibility of beguiling Russia into a world government by guaranteeing the absolute justice of its constitutional instruments. But no democratic constitution can operate except by majority rule. Russia would be in a minority in such a world order. Even if she were not driven by her Communist mania she would not accept such a minority status, certainly not as long as she believed in the possibility of becoming the majority in the world by means which she would lose in a constitutional order. We need not judge Russia too harshly on this particular issue, since it is quite obvious that we would not enter a world government in which a Communist majority were assured. Furthermore, all world government proposals, despite their "idealism," have a much too military conception of the "force" which would wield authority over nations. The conception is bound to be too military because the power of an integral community, which is the real force behind law, is lacking in a global order. Thus the world government proponents assure us that it would be possible to disarm the nations and turn military power into the sole hands of a world government. When the danger of tyranny in this procedure is called to their attention; they assure us that nations would of course always have the "right" to revolt against tyranny. Presumably a "civil" war would have a different moral standing than an ordinary war.

The proponents of a world government, limited

to the non-Communist world are even less realistic, though they boast of their realism. They would freeze the present polarity in the international situation and destroy the last bridge or bargaining counter between ourselves and Russia. (Incidentally one of the really dangerous hazards in the present situation is the possibility of Russia's withdrawal from the United Nations.) They would subject the working partnership between the nations, now allied in mutual defense and economic cooperation, to endless debate about the constitutional power of small and large nations in a federation. This is as if Washington's armies could not have moved in our revolutionary war until the question between large and small colonies had been settled in our constitutional convention, giving all states an equal vote in the Senate and unequal votes in the Congress. They would set up tests of democracy to determine who is worthy to enter into such a democratic federation which would sow strategic confusion into the co-operative arrangements of the moment.

Both projects of constitutional change are, in other words, abstract and irrelevant answers to our present situation. They can be regarded as more "Christian" only if we believe that it is Christian to worship "ideals," however irrelevant, rather than assume responsibilities however urgent.

From the standpoint of the Christian faith we ought to have some understanding of both the limits of human power in history and of the responsibilities we have within the limits of our power. The final issue is never in our hands. The forces of history are too complex to be easily coerced into the molds which proud men seek to press upon them. The hard recalcitrance of the human heart will be borne with the greater patience if we recognize that it is the recalcitrance of all our hearts, and not merely of this foe or that fanatic zealot. While the final issue is not in our hands (nor for that matter, subject to our prescience), there are always particular duties to perform and particular hazards to face. Christians in America will serve their Lord best by mitigating the inevitable pride of a very powerful nation, and helping it to assume responsibilities proportioned to its strength.

The greatest peril to world peace lies not in our possible failure to achieve perfect constitutional forms, but in the possible failure of our own nation to bear continuing responsibilities. If we should be tempted to retreat once more from the world, either because we imagined ourselves too generous, or because we found the uncertainties of the world situation unbearable, or because we failed to keep our own economic life healthy, a world conflict would almost certainly result from our failure. We are not the "weary and unyielding Atlas" who bears all the world's burdens, but we are by God's grace, the most powerful of the world's free nations.

# The Crisis in the University\*

DANIEL JENKINS

THE publication of Sir Walter Moberly's book with this title is an event of some ecumenical interest, both because of its own contents and because it is the fruit of a co-operative enterprise on the part of a group of Christians in a major field of secular society whose method of working demands careful study.

To deal with the second point first, this is a book not primarily about the Christian faith but about the university. It is written from within the university situation for university administrators and teachers by, at the time of writing, the holder of the most important academic post in Britain. Yet it is written from the point of view of a mature Christian faith, critically apprehended in terms of a very thorough knowledge of theology and of the contemporary situation, and entirely free from the pomposity and vagueness which so frequently disfigure statements by public dignitaries on religious matters. That in itself makes this an event of some importance. But there is more to it than that. For this book, while it is written by a single individual, is also an authoritative summing up of a long process of discussion which has gone on among Christian university teachers in Britain for several years. It represents the climax of a sustained piece of thinking, worked out in the closest relation to university affairs, on the part of a large and influential group of British university leaders and was carefully planned to appear in a manner which would ensure the maximum effectiveness.

It is worth stopping to consider this matter of technique because a great deal of Christian work, especially in relation to secular society, suffers from inadequate attention to it. There have been conferences enough on Christian duty in relation to secular society. Papers and books are frequently written on most aspects of the subject and, of course, a great deal of fundamental material has been prepared for the large ecumenical conferences. But comparatively little work of scope comparable to this has been prepared by the laymen on the job. Most of what has been done has been the work of theologians, who have often shown remarkable insight but have rarely been in a position to implement their conclusions. This, however, is a professional job, not only from the point of view of the theologian but also from that of the people within the field. Anyone seriously concerned with universities has to read this book. It is true that it is much easier to do work of this kind in the academic world than it is, for instance, in business or medicine. Also, although

the group which lies behind this book is substantial, it is still probably a university group who have many long and hard battles to fight before their influence in university life becomes decisive. Nevertheless it can be claimed that the book has succeeded in doing what it set out to do to a degree which is very remarkable among Christian enterprises in secular society. It has forced the universities to think hard about their basic problems and to do so in terms of a sharp Christian challenge which many of them will find it very hard to evade.

What the book says seems to me, if I may say so, of peculiar relevance to the American university situation. Perhaps the dominant impression made upon a visitor to your land is the immense size and importance of the systems of higher education that you are establishing at such a fabulous rate. America is ceasing to be the land of skyscrapers and becoming the country of campuses. No other nation has anything like a proportionate number of students and no other nation can hope to aspire to have such a number in our own time. The colleges and universities give the impression of becoming the formative influences in the future of America in the years which lie ahead. The vast majority of those young people who show any sign of a quality of leadership are increasingly likely to pass through these institutions at the most impressionable period of their lives. The universities are the key to the future in America to a greater extent than they are in any country in the world. A large part even of the leadership of the American labor unions is likely henceforward to be college-trained. It is fashionable in some university circles in Europe to scoff at the size of American universities and the dubious academic standing of some of the courses they offer. What is not so clearly seen is that, handled aright, America's vast educational investment may be the only way to achieve what the world has not yet seen, a large scale industrial culture composed not of "masses," but of free men with developed individualities.

Yet a visitor cannot help but be equally impressed by the small amount of fundamental thinking about the nature and basis of the university which is taking place in America. There are, of course, exceptions. After all, Arnold Nash's "The University in the Modern World" was written with the American situation chiefly in mind. Chancellor Hutchins of Chicago was one of the first to raise the question of the university's intellectual unity. And there are several interesting experiments in providing a more integrated college education taking place up and down the country. But a general view of the situation does suggest that the amount of attention which

\*Published by the Student Christian Movement Press, London, 15/-

is devoted to such questions as the ultimate purpose of university education, the relation of different parts of knowledge to each other and to a coherent view of life, the nature of academic freedom, objectivity, impartiality and commitment and to the other issues with which Sir Walter Moberly's book deals is comparatively slight.

What is a little disturbing on the American scene is that so little of what discussion there is goes on under Christian auspices or as a result of Christian initiative. America has many Christian colleges and many more which acknowledge a Christian origin, yet the cry is constantly heard that they differ but little in temper and purpose from non-Christian institutions. America has far more full-time students' chaplains, whether appointed by the Y.M.C.A. or the churches, in universities of all kinds than any other country in the world. Yet, while a surprising number of these gentlemen show, to the astonished admiration of European visitors, a virtuosity in devising spontaneous entertainments equal to that of the great Danny Kaye himself, their intellectual responsibilities appear to sit very lightly upon their shoulders. With a few shining exceptions, their purpose in the university appears to be to run a bigger and better young people's group than in the church back home.

The need for working out a fuller understanding of Christian duty in America is, therefore, as is being more and more widely recognized, very urgent. Sir Walter Moberly's book is written, of course, very much against a British background. Part of its value lies in the many concrete illustrations and applications it makes. This should not be a barrier, however, to its being carefully studied in America. Its very concreteness will help stimulate comparisons and contrasts with your own situation.

There are several points at which this book will be found particularly helpful by American readers. First, there is a very fair, thorough and acute analysis of the various philosophies current in the university world which offer alternatives to the Christian interpretation of reality, philosophies which are, if anything, even more self-conscious and articulate, under slightly different guises, in America than they are in England. Sir Walter would not claim that there is much in this discussion of "Spurious Remedies" which is original, but it is extraordinarily helpful and illuminating to have it worked out in relation to the university situation as it is, and not merely on the level of abstract ideas.

Secondly, the discussion of the nature of academic freedom and how it is related to the attempts of universities to become integrated communities is one of the most valuable sections of the book. This is a problem which has exercised the attention of British scholars a great deal in recent years and that is reflected in the careful treatment which it receives here. The conception of freedom so wide and ab-

stract that it precludes decision and allows the Christian case to go by default—which is, in effect, the conception which has been dominant in both British and American universities over the last couple of generations—is repudiated here. On the other hand, no concessions are made to what the writer does not hesitate to call the Christian "racket," the attempt to give a Christian veneer to institutions whose working assumptions deny the Christian faith on the part of those who have a vested interest in bolstering up the Christian cause in the world, even at the expense of truth. In some universities, a limited public recognition of the Christian faith and, in some subjects, an inquiry into the beliefs of candidates for posts may be right, but no genuine Christian integration can come unless men freely choose the Christian faith for themselves as true in open encounter with all those facts which appear to contradict it. One of the chief reasons for the ineffectiveness of Christian work in universities is that Christians have not been delivering the goods. They have not shown how Christian understanding is able to illumine and direct the university and a great deal of hard work must be done before they will be in a position to do so. That is why what needs emphasizing today is not so much the university's need for integration—that is only likely to achieve a superficial and over-simple integration—but its need for a freedom which allows a genuine intellectual encounter between those who do not see eye to eye together on fundamental issues.

Thirdly, this book contains what is surely the most authoritative discussion of the relation between the university and the state which has yet been produced. The peculiar British arrangement, of which Sir Walter Moberly has been the chief administrator, is naturally the background of the discussion but it should be of great interest to Americans in dealing with their own very complicated problems in this realm, which are likely to become more and more intense in the future, especially if the influence of the Roman Catholic Church continues to grow. Universities, like churches, do well to remember in these days that the initiative in defining their relationship with the state rests with them. Busy politicians cannot be expected to have the time or the equipment to embark upon such definitions and, when an issue comes up, are likely to take refuge behind formulae which have become respectable and are easy to apply. It is the interest, as well as the duty, of universities, like churches, to see that such formulae are available and that they are sound.

Fourthly, this book offers the outlines of a positive course of action to Christians in the university, whether they be theologians or laymen, which, in essentials, is as applicable to America as to Britain. Partly because of the size of American seminaries, your theologians often have little contact with the rest of the university community and there are con-

structive suggestions here about the way in which the theologian should fulfill his responsibility in the university. But the clearest call is to the lay university teacher. He must learn to become what is called, whether felicitously or otherwise, a lay theologian, who tries to pursue his own specialty with a mind conformed to that of Christ, and who makes it his business to know enough technical theology

for that purpose. That involves discipline and hard work, and a revision of the order of priorities in many lives. But we have too long imagined that a new Christian renaissance will come simply by our going around saying how desirable it is. The universities will be won for Christ only by a spiritual and intellectual effort commensurate with the magnitude of the task.

## The World Church: News and Notes

### Hromadka on the New Church Law in Czechoslovakia

(Extracted from an article by Dr. J. L. Hromadka in the October, 1949 issue of *Krestanska Revue*, organ of the Czech Student Christian Movement.)

"The church laws form only the presuppositions for a new construction of the church and state relationships and for the moral and spiritual filling of our new society. It is only a frame which has to be filled out by a vital and fruitful content. Both on the guardians of the public order and on the members of the churches will depend the way in which the atmosphere of the state and church life will develop. The five laws approved on October 14th touch on such delicate questions and such delicate and vital relationships, that it will require wisdom and prudence, open truthfulness and tactful patience on all sides in order that the laws may fulfill their mission.

"The representatives of the state gave a solemn assurance that the laws should ensure the churches, 'in order that they might freely and fully develop their activity and thus concentrate on their religious and moral mission from which they were in the past lead away by their material worries.' This is what the government proclaims as its motivation. Whoever took part in the closing discussions on the law in the church commission of the Central Action Committee of the National Front will remember the impressive words of the state minister Dr. A. Cepicka, who repeatedly stressed the interest of the builders of the state in the church and in religion as an important element of human society. 'We want living churches! We want them to grow!' So he said in one of his pronouncements which he completed by an ironical remark that it sometimes seems as if the present statesmen believe more in the future of Christianity than the majority of church members, who always watch the laws and the government with fear that the church might be strangled. The good will of the representatives of the state was manifested clearly. But the church congregations and the preachers will not meet the state and political authorities in the highest offices. The biggest task will arise 'down' in the villages and towns, between the members of the churches and the local, district and regional national committees, between the clergy and the party officials. It will matter especially here, where the people take part directly in public matters, that an atmosphere of trust and patience be created. We expect therefore,

that the state office for church matters will become an instrument with which the good will of the builders of the state will reach the most remote places in the republic and with which it will quickly remove the mistakes, misunderstandings, severities and injustices. It will be a long process and it may last for decades. But very much depends on what will happen at the very beginning and what tradition will be established in the relationships of the authorities with the churches. Be it as it may with the Marx-Leninist view on the future of the religion and of the church, there remains the fact that the living Christian faith, based on the prophets and apostles is a powerful leaven within history and that the tremendous construction of a socialistic society cannot consolidate itself without sincere cooperation on a genuine moral and spiritual basis with faithful Christians. We Christians are convinced that the most excellent and best in Communist endeavors is deeply rooted in the biblical message about God, the defender of the widows and orphans, of the poor and oppressed; and in the apostolic message about Jesus Christ who came in the form of a servant in order to glorify God by the obedience of the cross. The state has a right to defend itself against the abuse of the church and of religion for subversive ends. The churches are obliged to defend the purity of faith against attempts to use it for false and subversive political ends. But very much will depend on sensitive understanding of the special and particular mission of the churches, on whether a faithful Christian will be respected when, forced by his conscience—and not by political ill-will—he calls attention to the occurrence of injustice and of wickedness from which human society suffers to such an extent."

### Gilson on Faith, Science and Philosophy

Etienne Gilson, the famous French Catholic philosopher, in an address before the Catholic Intellectuals' Week in Paris, made the following remarks as translated by the Catholic Times of South Africa:

It pleases me to be told that the whole of philosophy is not worth an hour's labor if he who tells me is a Pascal, one of the world's greatest thinkers. One has the right to look down on what one knows and has transcended. Pascal did not despise science or philosophy; but he resented the time they had occupied him and distracted him from the contemplation of the deeper mysteries of divine love. But we are not all Pascals; we cannot look down on that which is above us, and science

# Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion  
537 West 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

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is one of the noblest praises of God: it is the understanding of what God has made.

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ did not come to save men by science or philosophy. He came to save all men; even scientists and philosophers. Science and philosophy are not necessary to salvation; they themselves need salvation. On the other hand, we must beware of an indiscreet zeal which, under pretext of saving them, destroys them. It is to be feared that, with the best intentions in the world, some "apologists" are apt to do this. To use science for apologetic purposes is an admirable program, provided we know not only our science but our apologetic.

For to be a good apologist one must first be a theologian—a very good theologian. This is a rare thing. There are too many so-called theologians who know smatterings of other people's theology or who are content to repeat theological formulas without having ever

thought out their real meaning. But if we are going to "use" science for apologetics, we must also be very good scientists, not cultivated dilettanti with smatterings of scientific information. If we would study science for God, we must study it for its own sake—or as if we were studying it for its own sake: that is the only way to acquire it. The same rule applies to philosophy. It is an illusion to suppose we can serve God by learning off a number of philosophical formulas without knowing why they are true. Similarly, it is useless to denounce errors if we do not understand why they are false. All this applies also to art. We are told that it was the Faith that raised up the great medieval cathedrals; but the Faith would have been powerless without architecture. Though the facade of Notre Dame may be an expression of the soul's yearning for God, it is also certainly a construction of geometry.

We Catholics, we who affirm the inherent goodness of nature, must take as the guiding principles of our action the axiom that piety can never dispense with technique. Without technical ability the most intense piety is incapable of using nature for the glory of God.

In conclusion, we must consider the other danger that threatens us. To serve God by science or art we must practice them as if they were ends in themselves. This is difficult, because they always tend to become so in fact, and as such they are regarded by our contemporaries. We must on no account become infected.

## A Special Need in Germany

There is a group of pastors in Berlin, known to us, who have been struggling to maintain parish work among proletarian groups and to make connection between the life of the church and the political realities of post-war Germany. They are responsible also for the publication of *Unterwegs*, a review which has done crucial work in the theological-political area.

Their resources have always been meager, and now both the parish work and the review are threatened by currency changes and the general financial pressure in Germany at this time. One parish worker has had to be released, payments to others are behind; the last issue of *Unterwegs* was paid for by a French friend of the group, but its future is quite uncertain unless more help comes.

If readers of CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS are able to help, we can arrange for contributions to be forwarded promptly to Berlin. It is a cause very much in line with the concerns which we know our readers share.

Contributions to CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS, 537 W. 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

## Author in This Issue

Daniel Jenkins is a leading young theologian of Britain who was, until recently, one of the secretaries of the Christian Frontier Council. Mr. Jenkins has just returned to Britain after a year as Commonwealth Fellow in America.